SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR NRCS-MN EQIP APPLICATION SCORING WORKSHEET

(Determine benefits only for factors to be addressed with EQIP funding.)

NATIONAL PRIORITY SCORING

EQIP has 4 national priorities: soil erosion, water quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat. In Minnesota applications must address at least 1 of the 4 national priorities in order to be a high priority application considered for funding. An application scoring 0 in the National Priority Score will be considered a low priority application and be ineligible for funding at this time. Grazing Systems (Factor G), Forest Management practices (Factor H), and Local/Area Concerns (Factor I) should be given points under erosion control (Factors A1 or A2) and distance (Factor F) as appropriate if the practice impacts these concerns. For example, conversion of cropland to Tree Establishment (practice 612) would likely result in points under Factor H, Factor A1, and possibly Factor F. Applications scoring less than 7 total base points (points before multiplying by the Priority weight) will be considered a low priority application and be ineligible for funding at this time.

Local and area levels must use the Priority weighting to indicate their priorities and thereby rank applications. The Priority weighting must be a number between 1 and 10. Multiply factor points by the priority weighting to derive the points for a factor.

FACTOR A1 - SHEET AND RILL, AND/OR WIND EROSION CONTROL

Estimate for any land use where the sheet and rill or wind erosion control measures are planned. Weighted average "Tons Soil per Acre per Year to be saved" estimates can be based on the representative soil map unit (most common or most critical) used to develop the proposed conservation measures; or Group soil map units by similar "KLS" (Soil erodibility I factor for wind) values if the conservation measures will be based on more than one soil map unit. If appropriate treat a stripcropped area as if it was one field. Use standard weighting procedures and follow worksheet instructions to determine points. Sheet and Rill and Wind erosion soil loss reductions can be added together. Score 2 additional points if the Soil Conditioning Index is changed from a negative to at least 0.0 on the field. The maximum points for this factor is 8.

FACTOR A2. CLASSIC GULLY OR EPHEMERAL EROSION CONTROL

Points are assigned if Diversion (362); Grassed Waterways (412); Grade Stabilization (410); Water and Sediment Control structures (638); or Dam (402) or other structural practices when used to control gullies on any land use. The maximum points for this factor is 6.

FACTOR B1--WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION PRACTICES

Assign points only for cost-shared conservation practices to be installed. Score 8 points for Nutrient Management (590). Practices with 6 points are: Grass Filter Strips (393), Pest Management (595), Riparian Forested Buffers (391), Sinkhole Treatment (725), Use Exclusion of livestock in riparian areas (472), and Well Sealing (351). 4 point practices are: Contour Buffer strips (332), Field Border (386), Irrigation Water Management (449), Streambank & Shoreline Protection (580), Environmental Quality Assessment (752) and, Diversions (362), Roof Runoff Management (558) and Closure of Abandoned Waste Facility (709) installed as stand-alone practices to improve water quality. When installed as a component of Wastewater and Feedlot Runoff Control (784) practices 362, 558, and 709 are scored only under Factor B2. Practice points are not cumulative. The maximum points for this factor is 8.

FACTOR B2-WASTEWATER AND FEEDLOT RUNOFF CONTROL/ CNMP

Points are assigned for feedlot runoff control (subfactor 1) OR for groundwater protection (subfactor 2) OR to facilitate seasonal application of organic materials (subfactor 3) OR a livestock mortality composting facility, silage leachate abatement system, or milkhouse wastewater system if the operation has no other waste management system problems that need to be addressed (subfactor 4). Choose only one of these four subfactors for scoring. 1 additional point can be scored if a livestock mortality composting facility or a silage leachate abatement system is needed to complete the waste management system. The maximum points for this factor is 7.

SUBFACTOR 1. FEEDLOT RUNOFF CONTROL

Assign points only if the applicant has enough land to apply manure in a manner that meets NRCS standards and specifications **and only if** a storage or treatment system will be installed. Assign points based on the FLEVAL rating for the existing condition. Exception: for sites where progressive implementation has occurred a pre-treatment or benchmark FLEVAL rating should be used in place of the current FLEVAL. The Feedlot Evaluation Model (FLEVAL) is used to rate the pollution potential of a feedlot. It is documented in “An Evaluation System to Rate Feedlot Pollution Potential” published by USDA-ARS as ARM-NC-17, April 1982, Library of Congress ISSN 0193-3787.

SUBFACTOR 2. GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

Assign points for groundwater protection if a feedlot runoff problem doesn't exist but storage will be needed to eliminate a groundwater pollution problem when a.) monitoring indicates a problem exists or b.) local officials,

Minn. Dept. of Health or Mn. Pollution Control Agency officials believe a problem exists and indicate so in writing or c.) feedlot runoff infiltrates through hydrologic group A soils into an aquifer of local importance and is believed to negatively impact the aquifer.

SUBFACTOR 3. SEASONAL LANDSPREADING

Assign points if the feedlot doesn't impact surface or groundwater but storage or composting of manure will be required to eliminate a land-spreading problem. The applicant a.) must have been required by law or in writing by a federal, state or local regulatory agency to avoid manure applications during certain times of the year or on certain locations, and b). can only comply with such requirements by constructing a storage structure or composting facility.

SUBFACTOR 4. ANIMAL MORTALITY FACILITY; SILAGE LEACHATE ABATEMENT; MILKHOUSE WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Assign points if a composting facility system is needed to eliminate potential problems associated with disposal of dead livestock or if MPCA or CFOs have indicated that a silage leachate or milkhouse wastewater problem exists.

FACTOR C—HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

Points are assigned if 1 of the listed practices is installed to benefit an at-risk species. 1 additional point is scored if the planned practice(s) benefits threatened and endangered species (follow MN eFOTG Section II.D.) for process and policy for practices dealing with threatened and endangered species.) The maximum points for this factor is 7.

FACTOR D-AIR QUALITY

Points are assigned if the practice is specifically installed to improve air quality (6 points) or if the practice addresses other resources but is also specifically designed to improve air quality as a secondary concern (1 point). 6 point practices are not stand alone and must be planned as specific components of waste storage structures, wastewater and runoff control practices (CNMPs) or waste utilization and include biofilters, scrubbers, diet manipulation, shelterbelts, geotextile or solid covers and anaerobic digestion. 1 point practices include immediate incorporation or injection of manure, mortality composting, windbreaks, cross wind stripcropping, and other erosion control practices whose primary purpose is to reduce wind erosion (e.g. residue management). The maximum points for this factor is 6.

FACTOR E—SENSITIVE WATERBODY/FEATURE

1 point is taken if the contract area is located within: **A.** a stream reach or lakeshed impaired because of turbidity, fecal coliform, or excess nutrients (Phosphorus) http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/index.html **or B.** the boundaries of a Source Water Protection Area (SWPA) http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/swa/index.htm (Over 7000 source water assessments have been completed but only a handful (130±) have delineated SWPAs. Remaining water supplies considered vulnerable to contamination will have preliminary boundaries delineated within the year) **or C.** an area delineated on a County Geologic Atlas or Regional Hydrogeologic Assessment as Very High or High Sensitivity to Aquifer or Ground Water System pollution. **Note: Points are taken for practices associated with factors A1, A2, B1, B2, G and H if the planned practices specifically address the water quality concern**. 1 additional point is taken if a completed or draft TMDL; Wellhead Protection Plan; or Phase II CWP or 319 Implementation plan has identified the practice as one to use to reduce pollution potential Maximum points for this factor are 2.

FACTOR F--DISTANCE

Receiving waters for scoring purposes are defined as permanent or intermittent streams identified on USGS topographic maps; lakes; DNR delineated calcareous fens; types 3 thru 5 wetlands; sinkholes, abandoned wells being sealed, or tile inlets which outlet directly into these features and other waterbodies considered to be of importance in local comprehensive water plans. Distance from applicable practice or field is determined by measuring from the nearest portion of the nearest field or practice. Check only one box. The maximum points for this factor is 4.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES SCORE

Enter all factor points from the preceding sections. Use the Local or Area Priority weighting to individual factors to prioritize resources in your district/area. Multiply factor points by the local/area priority factor to derive total points for a particular resource. Sum total points and enter both here and in final Score section. **An applicant must have a score greater than 0 in this section to be a high priority application eligible for EQIP funding at this time.**

FACTOR G – PRESCRIBED GRAZING SYSTEM

Score 6 points for implementing practices 528A or 528A1. The maximum points for this factor is 6.

FACTOR H-FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Score 6 points for implementing practices 490, 612, 655, 666. The maximum points for this factor is 6.

FACTOR I - ADDITIONAL LOCAL OR AREA CONCERN

Score 6 points for implementing specific practice(s) that address an identified additional Local/Area resource concern. Local priority points could also be scored for those applications which would improve the eligibility for future Conservation Security Program contracts and/or those applications that assist current CSP contracts to move up to the next Tier. The resource concern and priority is identified through the Local/Area Work Group process. The resource concern and scoring must be described in the Local or Area EQIP program description. Use the same concern and scoring for all Local/Area applications for the ranking period. The maximum points for this factor is 6.

FACTOR J--COST EFFECTIVENESS

Requested practices are a cost-effective solution for the primary concern. The maximum points for this factor is 1.

SCORE

Enter all factor points from the preceding sections. Use the Local or Area Priority weighting to individual factors to prioritize resources in your district/area. Multiply factor points by the local/area priority factor to derive total points for a resource. Add the total from the National Priorities Score and sum all total points. Area wide Priorities may also be established by the Area Office to prioritize applications received at that level.

Applications scoring less than 7 total base points (points before multiplying by the Priority weight) will be considered a low priority application and be ineligible for funding at this time.

Local/Area Concern EXAMPLES

#1. The work group determines it would like to prioritize applicants who use a conservation system approach. The work group determines a system which includes residue management of no-till, field borders, and herbaceous wind barriers would be the high priority system for controlling wind erosion. They also want to give some priority to systems using residue management of mulch till, contour buffer strips, and grassed waterways.
Under Local Concern they add:
"Wind erosion conservation systems of Residue Management – No-till, Field borders, and Herbaceous Wind Barriers receive 6 points with a 10 weight factor.
Water erosion conservation systems of Residue Management –Mulch Till, Contour Buffer Strips, and Grassed Waterways receive 3 points with a 10 weight factor."

So applicants could receive an additional 60 points or 30 points if they choose to apply the systems listed.

#2. In 2003 the work group determined it would like to prioritize any application in the Stinking Water Creek watershed, which has been targeted as an impaired watershed. In 2003 application in the watershed received 6 additional points. For 2004 the work group determines to further target specific water quality practices in the watershed.
Under Local Concern they add:
"Applications with nutrient management, field borders, terraces, or water and sediment control basins within the Stinking Water Watershed receive 6 points with a 10 weight factor.
All other applications within the Stinking Water Watershed will receive 3 points with a 10 weight factor.

#3. A work group determines to set a minimum score that applicants must meet in order to be eligible for funding. This minimum policy should be stated on the Work Group Development worksheet.